



**VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION:
SETTING AN AGENDA
FOR
IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING**

Mac Arthur Goodwin, President
National Art Education Association

2001

About the National Art Education Association. . .

Founded in 1947, the National Art Education Association is the world's largest professional art education association and a leader in educational research, policy, and practice for art education. NAEA's mission is to advance art education through professional development, service, advancement of knowledge, and leadership.

Membership (approximately 40,000) includes elementary and secondary art teachers, artists, administrators, museum educators, arts council staff, and university professors from throughout the United States and several foreign countries. It also includes publishers, manufacturers and suppliers of art materials, parents, students, retired art educators, and others concerned about quality art education in our schools.

The Association publishes several journals, papers, and flyers on art education; holds an annual convention; conducts research; sponsors a teacher awards program; develops standards on student learning, school programs and teacher preparation; and cosponsors workshops, seminars and institutes on art education.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to bridge visual arts education and educational policy decisions to improve student learning in the visual arts. Moving this agenda forward will require the National Art Education

Association's

(NAEA)

Board of Directors and its constituency groups to commit to 1) use this organiza-

tion's vast resources and intellectual capital to inform arts education practices and policy decisions, and 2) work within and beyond the NAEA infrastructure to improve student learning. Implementation of this agenda will require the alignment of NAEA initiatives and programmatic activities with educational needs.

While many school districts have made significant commitments to

areas such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, the arts are too often at the periphery of the curriculum. Central to this issue is the failure to link the importance of studying the arts to educating students.

Never before has such widespread attention been given to improving student learning. Providing appropriate resources to improve student learning in America's schools will require a commitment to educational excellence and collaboration between education stakeholders and policymakers.

The NAEA is dedicated to providing leadership on ideas and practices in visual arts education, including standards to

attain the national goals for education. It fosters collaboration and provides resources to advance student learning in the visual arts.

The NAEA resources mentioned in this paper have been used in many school districts to improve student learning in the visual arts. This document also cites resources developed by other education stakeholders that share common goals

with NAEA. This document is designed to assist legislators, departments of education, school boards, superintendents, principals, parents, the business community, and education organizations in the development and administration of policy decisions designed to improve student learning.

These are momentous times for education reform in general and arts education in particular. American education is at a “strategic inflection point.” Andrew S. Grove, CEO of Intel, Inc., describes a phenomenon in business that signals a need for change as a “strategic inflection point.” Such a point occurs when the balance of forces shifts from the old structure, from the old ways of doing business and the old ways of competing, to the new. When does a strategic inflection point take place? These shifts are hard to pinpoint, even in retrospect. In fact, participants who live through one develop a sense of being in an inflection point at different times (Grove, 1996).

This strategic inflection point in education has manifested itself in expectations for curriculum, instruction, assessment, delivery standards, professional development, and teacher preparation and certification. These areas must be viewed as comprehensive and inextricably linked. There are no neat and clear separations. In art, the “parts” must be seen in relation to each other. The way art is taught is a

part of what is taught, who teaches art, and how teachers of art are prepared. This context provides tremendous opportunities as well as challenges to inform education policy decisions.

In 1995, NAEA published the following two publications: 1) *A Vision for Art Education*; and, 2) *Suggested Policy Perspectives on Art Content and Student Learning in Art Education*. These resources set forth a vision for visual arts education reform and provide policy perspectives based on a compilation of NAEA initiatives and collaborations. Since the release of these publications NAEA has circulated the reports *Preparing Teachers of Art* (1997) and *Standards for Art Teacher Preparation* (1999) and conducted demographic research reported in *Art Teachers in Secondary Schools* (NAEA, 2001). In addition, the Association has published numerous briefing papers, flyers, *Translations*, and *Advisorys* that address education reform. NAEA realizes the importance of sharing resources with the broader educational community to advance student learning.

ATTENDING TO THE STRATEGIC INFLECTION POINT: WHERE ARE THE LEVERAGE POINTS?

NAEA realizes the importance of mounting a major effort to promote collaboration between this Association, educational stakeholders, and policymakers to align arts education

initiatives with general education reform effort (Goodwin, 1998). To this end NAEA is committed to providing resources to inform art education policy decisions. These resources 1) clarify the content of visual arts instruction, curriculum, and assessment; 2) foster implementation of delivery standards; and, 3) inform professional development, as well as teacher preparation practices.

Clarification for Content of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Realizing the need to provide a coherent vision of what it means to be artistically literate, NAEA collaborated with other professional arts organizations and agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National Endowment for the Arts to develop standards for what all students should understand and be able to do as a result of their cumulative learning experiences (*National Standards for Arts*

Education, 1994). These standards offer a coherent vision of what it means to be artistically literate.

Competency is the ability to use an array of knowledge and skills. There are many avenues to competence in the visual arts. Students may work at different levels at different times. Their studies may take a variety of approaches; their abilities may develop at different rates.

At this time of increased educational accountability, the need exists for approaches to assessment that articulate criteria for assessing and analyzing students’ achievement in visual arts. Priority should be given to learning in the visual arts, so that all students graduate with an informed appreciation and understanding of them. Schools are the only institutions specifically responsible for ensuring that all students learn about the visual arts. Levels of competence in the visual arts should be assessed to improve learning and ensure

What Students Should Know And Be Able To Do By The Time They Have Completed Secondary School.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand and apply visual arts media, techniques, and processes.• Use knowledge of visual arts structures and functions.• Choose and evaluate a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.• Understand the visual arts in relation to history and culture.• Reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merit of their work, and the work of others.• Make connections between visual arts and other disciplines.
<p>Source: <i>National Visual Arts Standards</i> (1994).</p>

accountability.

Visual arts education, like sound and lively education in every subject fosters:

- Active engagement in learning;
- A creative, committed, and exciting school culture of teachers, students, and parents;
- A dynamic, coordinated, and cohesive curriculum; and,
- Bridge building to the larger community, the broader culture, and other institutions.

These admirable goals are supported

by teachers in all subjects. They should not be mistaken for assessment of what students should know and be able to do as a result of studying the visual arts—as delineated in the *National Visual Arts Standards* (1994).

Quality assessment must rest on strong educational foundations. These foundations include 1) understanding how students learn; 2) organizing schools to meet the learning needs of all their students; 3) establishing high standards for student learning; and, 4) providing equitable and adequate opportunity to learn (Fairtest, 2000).

What Results Should We Expect From Students?
They should be able to communicate at a basic level about the visual arts. This includes knowledge, skills, and usage of the basic vocabularies, materials, tools, techniques, and intellectual methods of the discipline.
They should be able to communicate proficiently in at least one art form, including the ability to define and solve artistic problems with insight, reason, and technical proficiency.
They should be able to develop basic analyses of works of art from structural, historical, and cultural perspectives, and from combinations of those perspectives. This includes the ability to understand and evaluate work in the visual arts.
They should have an informed acquaintance with exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods, and a basic understanding of historical development in the arts disciplines, across the arts as a whole, and within cultures.
They should be able to relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across the arts disciplines.
Source: <i>National Visual Arts Standards</i> , 1994.

The principles of assessment delineated by the National Center for Fair & Open Testing (<http://www.fairtest.org/>) are congruent with the purposes of assessment in the visual arts. The Fairtest principles outlined below provide a vision of how to transform assessment systems and practices as part of wider school reform, paying attention to improving classroom assessment while ensuring that large scale assessment also supports learning.

To best serve learning, assessment must be integrated with curriculum and instruction. (Fairtest, 2000).

- Principle 1: The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning.
- Principle 2: Assessment for other purposes supports student learning.
- Principle 3: Assessment Systems should be fair to all students.
- Principle 4: Professional collaboration and development support assessment.
- Principle 5: The broad community participates in assessment development.
- Principle 6: Communication about assessment is regular and clear.
- Principle 7: Assessment systems are regularly reviewed and improved.

Delivery Standards

Support for visual arts education in America's schools varies widely from school-to-school and from state-to-

state. In some schools, art programs attract a large percentage of the student population. In other schools, programs are weak or reach only a small number of students. It is unfair to expect students to meet achievement standards in any discipline

unless they are given reasonable opportunities to learn the skills and knowledge specified. They must be provided with the necessary support by the school, including sufficient courses, staffing, materials, equipment, and facilities. Similarly, it is unfair to hold teachers accountable for their students' meeting the standards unless they are ensured adequate teaching and preparation time, scheduling, and other necessary conditions for teaching.

Program standards must include criteria for judging the quality of, and conditions for, school art programs. These standards should focus on issues and components at the school and district level that afford opportunities for students to learn and opportunities for teachers to teach art. More specifically, program standards address organization, curriculum, personnel, time and scheduling, facilities, materials, equipment, and budget.

Every student should have access to a

Program Standards for the visual arts are well developed.

balanced, comprehensive, and sequential program of instruction in visual arts taught by qualified teachers (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1995).

Facility needs and requirements for creative art activities are as varied as the individual differences among

Facility standards for visual arts education have been identified.

schools, teachers, and curricula. To broaden the areas of instruction and learning, rooms and equipment must be available to meet the needs of a diversified

program. To meet rising student enrollments, communities across the nation are constructing new schools and renovating existing ones. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (See: <http://www.ed.gov/inits/construction/impact2.html>) estimates two new K-12 school buildings are started each business day, with the total cost approaching \$16 billion this year. A recent Public Agenda report concluded that an additional \$200 billion is needed to modernize old school buildings. According to the National Education Association it would take \$322 billion to adequately build American schools, repair, and wire them for new technologies.

A number of studies have shown that many school systems, particularly those in urban and high poverty areas are plagued by decaying buildings that

threaten the health, safety, and learning opportunities of students. Good facilities constitute an important precondition for student learning, provided other conditions are present that support a strong academic program in the school. A growing body of research has linked student achievement and behavior to physical building conditions and overcrowding.

Design Standards for School Art Facilities (NAEA, 1993) includes photos and floor plans for specialized art rooms. This guide contains Art Room Planning for elementary, middle, and senior high schools; General Specifications; and, Specialized Art Rooms. This publication serves as a general framework for school art facilities planning because states have different requirements, i.e., types of lighting, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and other architectural specifications that depend on individual locations.

Professional Development

The following categories represent areas in which all art teachers require proficiency in order to develop into

Proficiencies for teachers of the visual arts are available, including those for National Board Certification.

truly effective members of the education profession. These categories, delineated in *Standards for Art Teacher Preparation* (NAEA, 1999), include aspects identified as essential

to effective teaching by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC).

- Art Content
- Curriculum Development
- Instruction
- Assessment in Art Education
- Knowledge of Students
- Professional Responsibility

Professionals at the state and local level need to understand that:

- Goals, standards, and assessment alone do not improve student performance.
- Comprehensive and long-term programs are crucial to taking advantage of the opportunities and meeting the challenge of reforming education.

Professional development programs must provide educational and personal experiences that enhance or change teaching practices to improve student learning. Teachers, like all professionals, need the support of ongoing professional development to assist in bringing about changes in their practices, in their beliefs and attitudes, and in the learning outcomes of their students. The states of

Models for professional development in the visual arts are available.

Missouri, New York, Ohio, and South Carolina have developed comprehensive professional development programs for

visual arts teachers. While there are many conceptual frameworks for professional development, the selected framework must fit the

context of the population and be based on sound research and tested principles. The Concerns-Based Approach Model (CBAM), (Hall & Hord, 1997) is one such professional development framework. The CBAM identifies stages of concern and levels of use in terms of adopting innovations and provides insight into why innovations may succeed or fail. This model delineates six different stages that reflect a hierarchical scheme in which an individual progresses from the awareness to focusing.

CBAM Stages of Concerns

- Stage 1—Awareness Concerns
- Stage 2—Person Concerns
- Stage 3—Management Concerns
- Stage 4—Consequence Concerns
- Stage 5—Collaboration Concerns
- Stage 6—Refocusing Concerns

Policy Perspectives for Professional Development (NAEA, 1995) provides an analysis of professional development and national goals. This resource focuses on the role of teachers, administrators, school boards,

Continually improving performance occurs in continually improving systems staffed by professionals who are continually improving.
(Fry, 1997).

businesses, colleges and universities, arts councils, state departments of education, and state legislatures in providing leadership for professional development.

Teacher Preparation Standards

Teacher preparation standards address and answer the complex questions about what beginning teachers should know and do. Visual arts education has experienced major changes in approaches to curriculum and instruction during the past 20 years. If the teacher preparation program is to prepare knowledgeable and competent practitioners and participants in the educational issues of the day, it must also be dynamic and current (Day, 1997).

College and university art content courses should be aligned with state and national standards. The responsibility of preparing teacher candidates for the visual arts remains largely with the education faculty who work within certification programs in higher education. Institutions vary in size, autonomy, academic orientation, and demographics employ faculty members. Faculty workloads vary in terms of expectations for teaching responsibilities, research and/or creative activities, and professional service commitments (Day, 1997).

The need exists for teacher preparation and licensing policies that reflect a

continuum of professional development, from preparation and induction to continuing education. Such policies would significantly affect arts education programs in colleges and universities. As a result, colleges and universities across the country will, out of necessity, reevaluate the form and structure of existing programs.

Visual arts teacher candidates must be taught by competent art education faculty who hold advanced degrees and whose backgrounds reflect

professional and practical experiences with learners in a variety of educational settings from early childhood to adult. The faculty should

model excellence in teaching and be committed to the improvement of art teaching.

SYSTEMIC ALIGNMENT: PROVIDING AN INFRASTRUCTURE TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

Because art programs differ across the nation—even in schools within a district—alignment is critical. Criteria for each component and/or level of the education system should be included. The whole system should meet and define how systems function to support the vision of visual arts education presented in the *National Visual Arts Standards*.

Education is a dynamic field of professional inquiry and practice that regularly experiences significant trends, changing issues, and new perspectives.

Despite NAEA's enormous distribution, the Association's work is one of this nation's best kept secrets.

Publication of *A Vision for Art Education Reform* (NAEA, 1995) and *Suggested Policy Perspectives on Art Content and*

Student Learning in Art Education (NAEA, 1995) was an important step in advocating the alignment of NAEA resources to advance student learning. However, the need still exists to provide an infrastructure to inform education policy decisions within and outside of the arts education community.

Finding bridges between curriculum, assessment, and instruction encourages teachers to focus on higher order integrated skills, to communicate art goals and standards and to design avenues to help students achieve them. An art curriculum that includes meaningful art learning and offers students choices in demonstrating their knowledge and skills, empowers them to be responsible for their own art education.

When instruction, curriculum, and assessment are aligned everyone (students, teachers, parents, administrators, and school boards) has an agreed upon basis for measuring progress. Assessments provide diagnostic

Teacher quality is central to this call for accountability. "Of all the contextual variables that have been studied to date (indicators of school socioeconomic status, class size, student variability within classrooms, etc.) the single largest factor affecting the academic growth of populations of students is differences in the effectiveness of individual classroom teachers." (William L. Sanders, NGA, 2000.)

information about what students know and can do, and where they need additional assistance.

Assessment also alerts teachers to needed changes in instruction and curriculum. Aligning curriculum with national and

state standards should precede coordinating professional development. Assessment should be related to the curriculum and well focused instructional strategies. A professional development program that centers on curriculum should also be aligned with art content, the assessment of student learning, and instructional strategies.

More specifically, there must be:

- Coordination across the school district by various agencies, organizations, and individuals;
- Continuity in policies and practices sustained long enough to bring about changes required by the standards;
- Shared vision so that the program, instruction, assessment, and visual arts content are widely adapted and appropriate to local circumstances; and,
- Equity that affords each teacher the opportunity to acquire new content and pedagogy consistent with the profession's high expectations.

<p style="text-align: center;">What Should Beginning Art Teachers Know and Do?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Content Of Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do art teacher candidates have a thorough understanding of the content of art?</i> • <i>Can art teacher candidates make informed selections of instructional content?</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Knowledge Of Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do art teacher candidates have a comprehensive knowledge of student characteristics, abilities, and learning styles?</i> • <i>Are art teacher candidates able to use a knowledge of students to plan appropriate instruction?</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Curriculum Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Can art teacher candidates develop curriculum reflective of the goals and purposes of art education?</i> • <i>Can art teacher candidates develop curriculum inclusive of the goals, values and purposes of education, the community, and the society?</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are art teacher candidates able to create effective instructional environments conducive to student learning?</i> • <i>Are art teacher candidates well-versed in pedagogy?</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment In Art Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Can prospective art teachers conduct meaningful and appropriate assessments of student learning?</i> • <i>Can art teachers deal with broader issues in the school setting beyond concern for individual students? Can they assess the entire art program within the school or district setting?</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Professional Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do art teacher candidates continually reflect on their own practice?</i> • <i>Do art teacher candidates recognize their responsibilities to the schools and community?</i> • <i>Can art teacher candidates contribute to the growth of the profession?</i> <p style="text-align: center;">Excerpts from <i>Standards for Art Teacher Preparation</i> (NAEA, 1999).</p>

SETTING AN AGENDA: WHAT MUST BE DONE

During this period of widespread public calls for accountability and systemic education reform, the NAEA realizes the importance of facilitating an agenda for visual arts education reform that transforms rhetoric to reality. Throughout the past decade, NAEA has provided numerous resources to refine its vision—a vision that takes advantage of existing opportunities and meets the challenges of providing leadership for reform in visual arts education. This document addresses the pervasive question: How do we know if students are gaining the skills and knowledge that we profess? Setting an agenda based on a compilation of NAEA initiatives, fostering new collaborations, and focusing on advocacy that transforms rhetoric to reality will guide the field through this unparalleled opportunity to become part of, and influence educational reform.

NAEA's next step is to marshal its resources and disseminate them in a manner that informs education policy decisions in areas of:

- Instruction
- Curriculum
- Assessment
- Delivery Standards
- Professional Development
- Teacher Preparation and Certification

To this end, I call upon the NAEA Board of Directors, working in

conjunction with Delegates Assembly, Regional Vice Presidents, Division Directors, Standing Committees, Ad Hoc Committees, Affiliates, and Issues Groups to align their efforts and institute substantive plans that focus on the leverage points delineated in this paper.

I also call upon other education organizations and education legislators, departments of education, school boards, principals, and parents to embrace the agenda and resources set forth in this document. We share a common goal: improving student learning. We must marshal our

Opportunities must be seized or they will be lost. We have an opportunity to inform education policy decisions.

The National Art Education Association stands ready to collaborate with education stakeholders to advance substantive education reform.

I solicit your energy, support, and action to the proposition set forth in this document:

Working together we can make a difference.

We can provide the best art education possible for students.

energies to take advantage of the opportunities the current education reform presents to lead the field through this strategic inflection point. We must utilize our resources to improve student learning in visual arts.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM NAEA

No. 203 Designing Assessment in Art

By Carmen L. Armstrong. A valuable in-depth study of art assessment written especially for art educators. The book presents and discusses what can be assessed in art; various kinds of assessment instruments; developing and administering assessment; alternatives to traditional assessment; and scoring and reporting results. This book integrates assessment of student learning with curriculum and art instruction. It provides multiple examples, sample formats, and suggestions for implementation. The book illustrates various means of observing and recording evidence of student art learning. An important resource for art teachers and schools reviewing assessment plans for their art programs. An excellent text for staff development seminars.

216 pgs. {1994} ISBN 0-937652-71-7

\$25.00; **Member Price \$17.00**

No. 221 Child Development in Art

Anna M. Kindler, Editor. *Child Development in Art* is a unique resource for early childhood, elementary, and secondary teachers interested in better understanding of artistic and aesthetic potential of their students and exploring art pedagogy sensitive and responsive to learners' characteristics and needs. The authors contributing to this book come from fields of psychology, sociology, communication, cultural studies and art education. Together, they offer a comprehensive account of current knowledge about artistic and aesthetic development.

210 pgs. {1997} ISBN 0-937652-77-6

\$22.00; **Member Price \$15.00**

No. 219 Student Behavior in Art Classrooms: The Dynamics of Discipline

By Frank Susi. This book helps you solve problems 5 ways! It offers practical suggestions and ideas; helps to connect instruction and student behavior; outlines strategies for preventing misbehavior; suggests approaches when discipline problems occur; summarizes research studies in thousands of classrooms to help understand misbehavior and prevent it. Example topics include: Setting rules, Monitoring, Arranging the artroom, Eye contact, Teacher behavior, Ownership, Preventive practices, Contracts, Keeping records, Punishment, Violent behavior, and much more. A cardinal resource for teacher preparation programs, student teachers, and staff development libraries.

41 pgs. {1995} ISBN 0-937652-75-X

\$20.00; **Member Price \$9.00**

No. 220 Readings in Discipline-based Art Education: A Literature of Educational Reform

Ralph A. Smith, Editor. This sourcebook is the result of more than 2 years of research by Smith with 42 chapters by prominent art educators—scholars, practitioners, and researchers. The reader will find an array of DBAE ideas and practice. Contributors to this anthology identify major issues and offer indepth views about the meaning, interpretations, and characteristics of DBAE. They offer guides on

artistic and aesthetic development, preservice and inservice for teachers, staff development, and teacher preparation. Several chapters examine the functions of museums and the evaluation of museum education programs. There are provocative chapters about learning outcomes; teaching art history; types of art criticism; issues of gender, and multiculturalism; and the relationship of art education and postmodernism.

429 pgs. {1999} ISBN 1-890160-12-1

\$25.00; **Member Price \$20.00**

No. 228 Design for Inquiry: Instructional Theory, Research, and Practice in Art Education

By Elizabeth Manley Delacruz. This unique book translates instructional theory and research into today's curriculum for student learning in art. It is loaded with substantive examples of instructional methods, instructional strategies, learning principles, motivation, and research on teacher effectiveness. *Design for Inquiry* focuses on current research on teaching and teacher effectiveness, a comparison of instructional methods, a discussion of learning and motivation (including the relationship between teacher attitude and student success), and a look at daily life in the classroom from both teacher and student perspectives. The section in the final chapter on "What is Good Teaching?" is especially helpful for self-reflection and evaluation.

94 pgs. {1997} ISBN 0-937652-98-9

\$18.00; **Member Price \$11.00**

No. 256 Creating Curriculum in Art

By Phillip Dunn. *Creating Curriculum in Art* outlines the theoretical orientations for art curricula, the five critical areas for art curriculum development, an examination and analysis of curricular approaches, and a discussion of student evaluation and art program assessment. This book translates art theory into curriculum—and into daily practice for the art teacher, curriculum coordinator, and for the school administrator! *Creating Curriculum in Art* is a central text for anyone teaching art curriculum; anyone redesigning an art curriculum; anyone writing and planning an art curriculum; and anyone assessing an art curriculum. *Creating Curriculum in Art* is for the student, the young professional, as well as the experienced art educator! It is indispensable for teacher centers, libraries, and staff development collections.

96 pgs. {1995} ISBN 0-937652-88-1

\$18.00; **Member Price \$11.00**

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